



GAY SPOOK

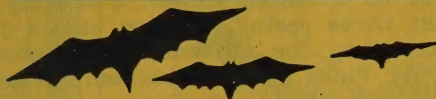
NEWSLETTER OF THE PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER

P.O. BOX 574

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80901

PHONE (719) 471-4429

OCTOBER, 1990



The United Court of the Rising Sun Empire

The United Court of the Rising Sun Empire will be voting for their new Emperor and Empress, along with their new Member at Large positions on October 7, 1990. Dale Motel from 12:00 to 5:00 pm. Please come out and show your support. Anyone living in the southern Colorado area is welcome to vote. Please bring I.D.

Coronation XV, will be held at the City Auditorium on October 13, 1990. 5:30 pm. Please come out and enjoy the largest gay function of the year for Southern Colorado. There will be plenty of entertainment, and people from all over the United States will be here to say good-bye to the reigning Monarchs of the United Court.

P.L.W.A. COMMITTEE

The PLWA committee will be meeting the first week in November to discuss the plans for the 91' benefit year. Members of the committee will be notified by the middle of October on the date, place and time. Please stay posted to Gayspeak for more information.

COMMUNITY CENTER MEMBERS

Absentee ballots may be received by calling 473-7794 and leaving your name, address, (including zip code) and phone number. After David has verified your a current paid member he will send you a ballot. Deadline for requesting ballots is tuesday October 9, 1990.

Remember voting for the Center is October 13, 1990. 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. At the city auditorium, side entrance.

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

The Board of the Pikes Peak Gay Community Center, is bring up for a vote issue, the change of the Centers name. The new name for the center should this pass will be; **PIKES PEAK GAY/LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTER**. Please exercise your right as a member of the Center and vote on October 13, 1990. 10am to 2pm at the City Auditorium. Please look for signs and use the side entrance.

LETTER OF INTENT FOR THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT OF THE PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER

Two years ago this month, I walked into an annual meeting of P.P.G.C.C. and started asking why? Why were things being done the way they were doing them? Why did some members on the board have such a negative attitude on changing things and trying new ideas? I was given many different reasons why things were the way they were. Then one of the board members said... If you don't like the way we are handling something, why don't you run for a board position. So when the Vice - President position became available about six months later, I asked for it. That was a year and a half ago. The community supported me for re-election last October and now I am asking you to support me for election of President to the Pikes Peak Gay Community Center. With the help of the board and the support of the community I have been able to increase our memberships

to over 120 active paid members. That is the largest paid membership organization in the gay community in southern Colorado.

There are many new things that the Center can try for fund raising and outreach. All it really takes is a person or a group of people who care, to go out and try something new. It's easy to just sit at home and say it won't work so why try. However it takes someone special to get out and keep trying new ideas.

The Community Center can grow even more than it has in the last year. We can put into effect different outreach programs to inform people who we are. Outreach is the first step in fund raising. By reaching out and letting people know we are here, we will be allowing more people to get involved with us.

Please use your right to vote. Please vote yes for me to be your next President of the Pikes Peak Gay Community Center.

Thank you,
David Eidson/Vice - President/P.P.G.C.C.

**LETTER OF INTENT
FOR VICE - PRESIDENT
PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER**

Many of us have been involved in organizations in our community. We all get involved for a different reason. I feel everyone should be commended for wanting to be a volunteer. I don't feel this is a race to see who is the better person for the job, but who the community wants to represent them for the next two years as Vice - President.

I have been involved with this community in many different ways for over 10 years now. It is something in my heart that tells me I want to help. I love doing volunteer work.

The community has supported me in P.P.M.C.C., DIGNITY WITH FRIENDS, the UNITED COURT, the P.L.W.A. BENEFITS, and the PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER. I am asking you, the community, to support me for the position of Vice - President now.

As an outreach goal, I would like to get more women involved, to support our efforts in fundraising, and unity. The word unity is part of the word community, and we need to try and get as many of our sisters and brothers to work together as much as possible.

In closing, I am asking you to consider who you want to represent you as Vice - President, and please vote on October 13th,

at the City Auditorium from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Sincerely and God Bless,
Barb Granniss

**LETTER OF INTENT FOR
VICE - PRESIDENT
PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER**

My name is Rick Brown and my intent is to run for Vice - President/Membership Chairperson for the Pikes Peak Gay Community Center. I have lived in Colorado Springs for fifteen years and have been actively involved as a member of our community for the past three years. Starting with a group known as Step One. I went on to become a member of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church and also worked on P.P.G.C.C. Helpline for one year. Within a short period of time I became involved with Gayspeak Newsletter in the capacity of ad manager as well as paste up and art director. At the present time I am still doing paste up and art work for the newsletter. Making a total involvement with Gayspeak of two and a half years. For a period of time I also acted as coordinator of a men's group known as Christopher Street. Although the group was essentially a mens group, our policy was that everyone was welcome. We frequently shared recreation and interacted with the group 40 + women.

Over the past few years I have been extensively involved with many programs sponsored by P.P.G.C.C., Pikes Peak M.C.C., and the United Court of Southern Colorado. From these areas I have also found myself involved in fund raising events for the above groups as well as the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association, People Living With Aids and the Annual Lois Lane Labor Day Marathon.

Presently I am coordinator for the Centertainers, a P.P.G.C.C. support group involved in entertainment and fundraising. I also act as fund raising co - chair person with Koshi Flathers for Pikes Peak M.C.C.

I have never held a position on the Pikes Peak Gay Community Center Board of Directors, but with the contacts I have established I have earned a lot of respect from our community and feel that I would be a definite asset as Vice - President/Membership Chairperson.

I want very much to serve our united lesbian and gay community and work with them as we grow to be even more united and respected as the individuals that we are.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Brown

VOTE Anita Empress XV

Oct. 7
Dale
Motel
12-5 pm

Anita Candidate for Empress XV

Being a court member of the United Court of the Rising Sun Empire, has given me a chance to meet a lot of people. It has been a privilege to be a member of our court. Throughout this last year we have put on many benefit shows for one reason or another. It has made me proud to have been a help to those who have needed the courts help and support. As Grand Duchess XIV I helped to serve our community with pride and pleasure. It was unfortunate that I had to take a leave of absence. But it was to take care of a very close friend who needed my help. For years he has taken the roll of my father. It was the right thing to do in return. After all we are all a family no matter what state or city we live in. When I returned to our city and family, I was known as the Traveling Duchess and Ambassador to Salt Lake City, again I took pride in the title given to me and will cherish it forever. Now I find myself ready to serve our community as Empress XV. I take pride in what I do. I will respect and work for you, the lesbian and gay people of Southern Colorado. Colorado Springs is my home now and I am proud to say that I am a member of this community and of the United Court of the Rising Sun Empire. I wish to say that as your next elected Empress, I will do my best to represent your interest from my heart. You and I can work together for a better community and a closer united family. I'm strong, committed, dependable and hard working. This is what makes an Empress. Keep in mind any one can be an Empress but only the devoted and hard working one will be remembered as an Empress. Please show your support on October 7th 1990 as you cast your votes. Should you vote for me I'll be honored to work for you and for a stronger united community. Lets stay together and be one big happy family. I can't be an Empress without your support and trust. People make the Empress, I will be representing Southern Colorado. Thank you for your support. These are memories that will be respected and cherished always.

Candidate for Empress XV

Anita Baery

Voting will be held at the Dale Motel on October 7th 1990 in room 121 from 12 noon till 5 p.m. in the evening. Show your support and pride.

KD's EATERY

Breakfast Menu
7:00 A.M. - 11 A.M.

(HERB'S LUNCHEONETTE)

Lunch Menu
11 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Pancakes &
French Toast

7 EAST VERMILJO
CO. SPRINGS, COLORADO

Hot Sandwiches
Salads
Dairy Bar
Desserts

632 9712

David Eidson owner



KD PRINTS

3514 IVYWOOD SUITE A
PUEBLO, COLORADO
719/473-7794
719/561-2364

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Custom Engraving • Fax Service

Business Services

PIKES PEAKS GAY COMMUNITY CENTER TREASURER'S REPORT

Aug. 15, to Sept. 3, 1990
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY

CHER PENNINGTON

GENERAL
FUND

PLWA
FUND

\$1335.45

\$210.00

BEGINNING TOTAL ASSETS

CHECKS PAID OUT

8-26	#1051	David Eidson reimbursement Gayspeak publ. & mail	94.90
8-26	#1052	United Court add for coronation program	85.00
9-04	#1053	C & B Balloons File Cabinet	20.00
9-04	#1054	United Court / rent for City Aud.	25.00
9-04	#1055	Co. Community Directory Pass Due Advert. 1988-89	25.00
9-14	#1056	David Eidson reimbursement Gayspeak Publ. & Mail	81.35

TOTAL PAY OUTS

\$331.25

DEPOSITS

7-26	2 blk party t-shirts	51.50	
	1 blk party space		
	Gayspeak ads		
8-20	2 memberships	162.00	
	Gayspeak Ads		
8-20	2 memberships	12.00	
8-22	donation from C.G.R.A. for P.L.W.A. fund 1991		30.50
8-22	accounting error	.02	
8-27	Gayspeak ad	45.00	

TOTAL DEPOSITS

270.52

30.50

Ending checking account balances

1274.72

240.50

Total of Both Lines

\$1515.22

PIKES PEAK GAY COMMUNITY CENTER
TREASURERS REPORT
SEPTEMBER 1989 - SEPTEMBER 1990
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:
CHER PENNINGTON

BEGINNING BALANCE

		GENERAL	PLWA
September 1, 1989		\$ 872.13	
September Deposits		+ 925.73	
September Checks Paid Out	1001 & 1002	- 390.17	
September Balance		\$1407.69	
October Deposits (no deposits)			
October Checks Paid Out	1003 & 1004	- 103.80	
October Balance		\$1303.89	
November Deposits		+ 98.00	
November Checks Paid Out	1005 & 1006	- 157.23	
November Balance		\$1244.66	
December Deposits		+ 141.00	
December Checks Paid Out	1007 & 1008 & 1009	- 145.00	
December Balance		\$1240.66	
January Deposits		+ 148.00	
January Checks Paid Out	1010 & 1011 & 1012	- 250.87	
January Balance		\$1137.79	
February Deposits		+ 664.00	
February Checks Paid Out	1013 - 1018	- 277.98	
February Balance		\$1523.81	
March Deposits		+ 176.70	+ 202.00
March Checks Paid out	1019 - 1023	- 283.08	- 49.14
March Balance		\$1417.43	\$ 152.86
April Deposits		+ 572.88	+ 336.82
April Checks Paid Out	1024 - 1028	- 694.67	-
April Balance		\$1295.64	\$ 489.68
May Deposits		+ 142.00	+4490.75
May Checks Paid Out	1029 - 1034	- 601.04	-
May Balance		\$ 836.60	\$4980.43
June Deposits		+ 798.00	+ 48.17
June Checks Paid Out	1035 - 1040	- 329.57	-
June Balance		\$1305.03	\$5028.60
July Deposits		+ 219.02	+ 210.00
July Checks Paid Out	1041 - 1050	- 188.60	-5028.60
July Balance		\$1335.45	\$ 210.00
August Deposits		+ 270.52	+ 30.50
August Checks Paid Out	1051 - 1056	- 331.25	-
August Balance		\$1274.72	\$ 240.50
ENDING BALANCE			
September 1, 1990		\$1274.72	\$ 240.50

TOTAL OF BOTH LINES

\$1515.22

I certify the addition and subtraction of these figures are correct. Sam S. H. 9/17/90

THE UNITED COURT OF THE RISING SUN EMPIRE
OF SOUTHERN COLORADO

present

THE MIRROR OF TIME

"Reflections"

PAST EMPIRES B. C.

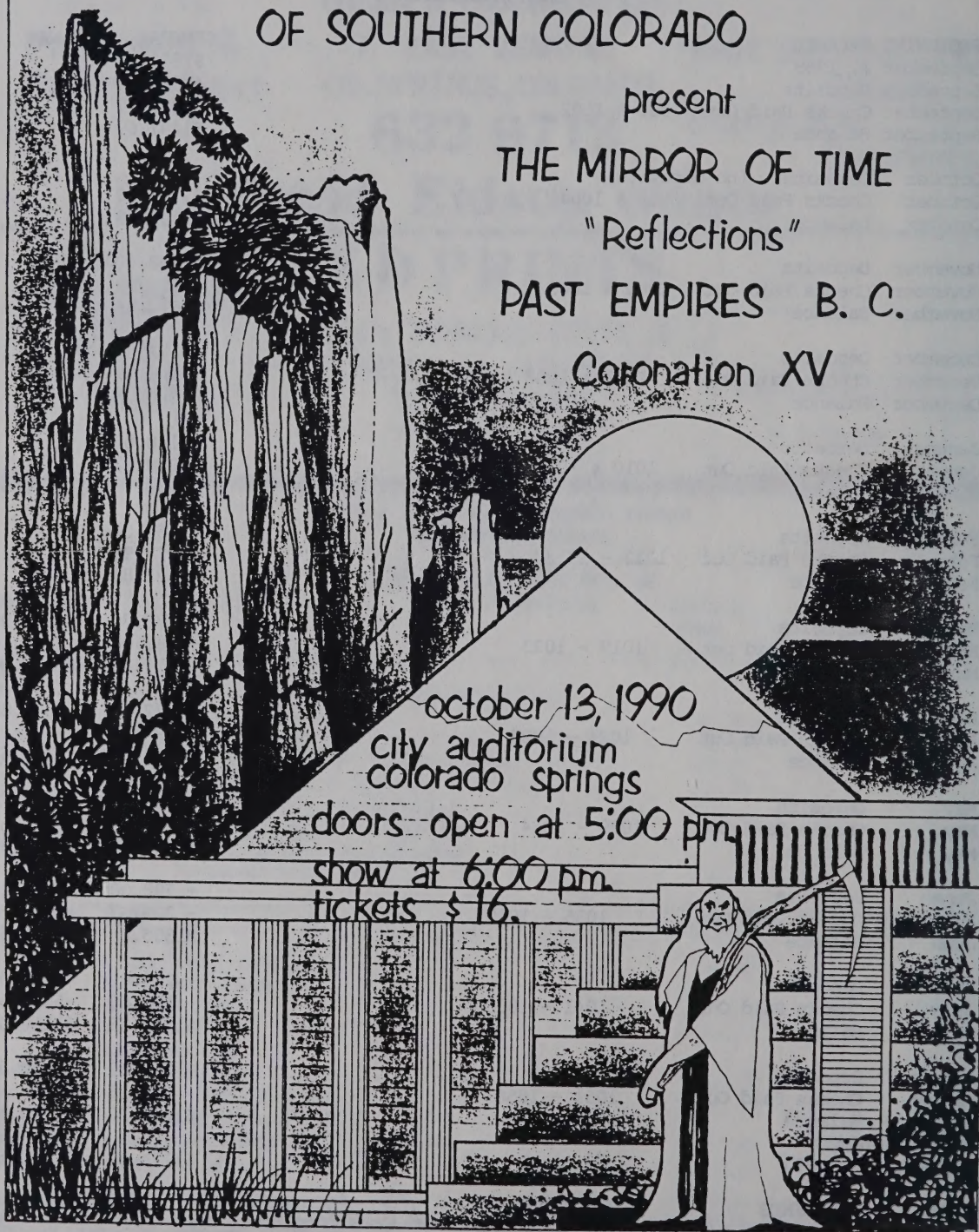
Coronation XV

october 13, 1990
city auditorium
colorado springs

doors open at 5:00 pm

show at 6:00 pm

tickets \$16.



A Loaded Word



by Cindy Crumrine and Ann Loughman
(Community/Albany, NY)

The question comes up from time to time in our community as to why we need to use the word "lesbian." Why not let the term "gay" cover us all?

Historically, the lesbian community has been all but invisible. When researchers studied any aspect of homosexuality, it was the men they studied, and the men they extrapolated their data from—often applying the conclusions equally to lesbians.

Lesbians have always been considered to be fewer in number than gay men: two to five percent of the female population has been a figure often cited, a much lower proportion than the ten-to-twenty percent of the male population that gay men are considered to comprise. Whether any of these figures has much validity is questionable, but those of us who are out and about tend to think these numbers are pretty low. Perhaps part of the reason is that two women living together don't attract much attention, especially when working women have traditionally been paid salaries so much lower than their male counterparts that sharing living expenses was a necessity.

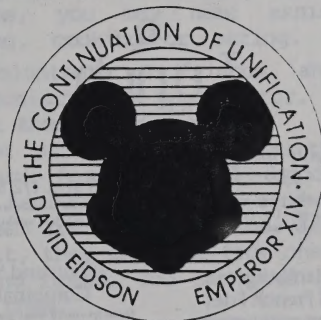
Sexism has been every bit a problem for lesbians as it has for straight women, in more areas than salary differentials. In the sixties and seventies, when various liberation movements were getting off the ground, women often found themselves fetching coffee and running the mimeograph machine, while the men took on the leadership roles. Stokely Carmichael once remarked that the place of women in the Black Power Movement was on their backs. No wonder many lesbians not only came out through the Women's Movement, but to this day continue to feel equally—if not more—connected to the women's community than to the gay community. As lesbians, we face a double dose of prejudice—both sexism and homophobia—and if we happen to be a person of color, or differently abled, or a member of any other minority group, we have even more to contend with.

The AIDS crisis has permanently changed not only our community, it's changed the perception of our community. AIDS was tailor made for media that love bad news—and bad news about our community in particular. Reporters missed no

opportunity to describe gay men with multiple partners or with sexual habits that Middle America found distasteful. The media focused its attention almost exclusively on gay men, despite the fact that lesbians have been a critical part of the AIDS movement, whether as policy makers, researchers, or caregivers.

But no matter what our numbers are or how we have been perceived historically, there is one final point: everyone has the right to be called what they asked to be called. The reasons we ask to be called "gay" or "lesbian" rather than "homosexual" are clear, just as we ask to be called "openly gay" or "openly lesbian" rather than an "admitted homosexual." Surely we can understand why a person with AIDS would prefer not to be called an AIDS "victim." We ask to be called lesbians because we are proud of who we are—women and members of the lesbian/gay community.

And because every time someone refers to the lesbian and gay community—or any time we use those two words together—it is a reminder that we are women and men together. And we are in this together.



PRINCE ROYAL XIV KEVIN CONBOY
AND

MARQUIS XIV ED SELLS

WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO

EMPEROR XIV DAVID EIDSON'S

STEPPING-DOWN SHOW
OCTOBER 10TH, 1990

AT THE

EXIT LOUNGE 8:30PM
COLORADO SPRINGS

THE HIDE & SEEK COMPLEX

NOW OPEN



Lunch

Served 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Daily Special \$3.95

Ask your server. Soup or salad, roll, fried beef or coffee. For additional .75, includes draft beer or cocktail.

Hamburger and French Fries

1/3 lb. fresh ground hamburger, garnished with lettuce, tomato, onions and pickles. Served with fresh cut french fries. \$4.75
With cheese \$3.95

Chef's Salad

Garden fresh lettuce surrounded by Danish ham, roast beef, Swiss and American cheese, garnished with tomato and baked egg wedges. Served with bread and butter, and your choice of home made salad dressings. \$3.75

Daily Sandwich Special

Ask your server for today's choice. Includes chips and pickle spear. \$4.50

Soup and 1/2 Sandwich

Includes cup of soup and one half sandwich. \$3.25

Salad and 1/2 Sandwich

Salad with your choice of dressing and one half sandwich. \$3.25

Soup and Salad Combination

Includes cup of soup, garden salad, roll and butter, choice of dressing. \$2.95

Side Orders

Home made soup, bowl \$2.00
Cup \$1.25

Garden Salad \$1.50

French fries, regular \$1.25
Large \$1.75

Dessert of the Day \$1.50

Beverages .75

Hot coffee, iced tea, hot tea, Soft Drinks

Cocktails, wine and a large selection of beer available.

Alcohol and Unaccompanied
Orders for off premises consumption
18% tax, minimum \$10.00 - add 10%

Dinner

Served 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Daily Special \$5.25

Ask your server.
Soup or salad, dinner roll and butter

New York Strip

10 oz. prime cut New York Strip, served with soup or salad, potato and vegetable, dinner bread and butter. \$8.50

Rib Eye Steak

Cooked to your preference. Served with soup or salad, potato and vegetable, dinner bread and butter. \$7.50

Broiled Breast of Chicken

Whole breast of chicken broiled to perfection, prepared with lemon butter or teriyaki sauce, soup or salad, potato and vegetable, dinner bread and butter. \$6.25

Prime Rib

7 oz. premium cut Prime Rib, served with horseradish sauce, soup or salad, potato and vegetable, dinner bread and butter. \$7.50

Hamburger and French Fries

1/3 lb. fresh ground hamburger, garnished with lettuce, tomato, onion and pickles. Served with fresh cut french fries. \$4.75

Sunday Brunch

Noon-3:00 p.m.

Deluxe Chef's Salad

Garden fresh lettuce surrounded by Danish ham, roast beef, Swiss and American cheese, garnished with tomato and baked egg wedges. Served with bread and butter, and your choice of home made salad dressings. \$4.25

Chef's Pasta Special

Ask your server for tonight's selection. Served with soup or salad, vegetable, dinner roll and butter. \$5.75

Side Orders

Home made soup, bowl \$2.00
Cup \$1.25

Garden Salad \$1.50

French fries, regular \$1.25
Large \$1.75

Dessert of the Day \$1.50

Beverages .75

Hot coffee, iced tea, hot tea, Soft Drinks

Wine & Beer

Cocktails, wine and a large selection of domestic and imported beers available.

Rocky Mountain White, Blush and Ale 50¢ bottle - \$1.50 glass

Domestic Beers \$1.75
Imported Beers \$2.05

Alcohol and Unaccompanied
Orders for off premises consumption
18% tax, minimum \$10.00 - add 10%

Yvonne

of

HAIRCUTS AT THE DEPOT

76 S. Sierra Madre
Downtown Colorado Springs

635-8422

C.G.R.A./COLORADO SPRINGS

C.G.R.A./COLORADO SPRINGS held their elections on September 15th, at the Man Stop Bar in the Hide and Seek. The new President is Harold Colbert, Vice - President is Stan Relaford, Recording Seceretary is Bryon Schneider, Treasurer is Mark Deggendorf, Membership Person is Koshi Flathers, and Director is Stan Relaford.

C.G.R.A. (Colorado Gay Rodeo Association) is an organization in Colorado Springs that has been very active with the community and other organizations that represent our lifestyle. To receive more information on what is happening with the organization, please call the Helpline at 471-4GAY.

Eating Smart When HIV Infected

Jesus M. Gonzalez

When you are infected with HIV, your immune system is being damaged. Eating right can help it fight back to the best of its ability, and can help your body stay strong during any medical treatments you may need. And consider this: When we feed our bodies well, most of us feel better and have a more positive attitude about life. Eating tasty meals with people who care about you can be wonderful "medicine" for your emotional health.

Drug and Food Reactions

At some point during your treatment you will have to take medicines. The food we eat can affect how the medicines work, and conversely, the medicines can affect how our bodies use food.

Because there are new drugs and treatments being tried for HIV and AIDS frequently, this book (Nutrition and HIV: Your Choices Can Make a Difference) cannot cover everything about which foods react

in what way with which drugs. It is also important to know that many physical symptoms can be made better or worse by the foods you eat. For these reasons, always consult your doctor about food and your condition.

What is Good Nutrition?

Good nutrition means eating foods each day that will give you the vitamins, minerals, and calories to keep your body strong. It means getting enough protein to keep your body built up and to repair any damage it might have. And importantly, it means different things at various stages of HIV infection.

If you have HIV but have no signs of disease, concentrate on eating a wide variety of healthy foods each day. There is no one type of food that has everything for us; try to choose your foods from the four basic food groups.

Perhaps your HIV is causing minor health problems. Eating may be uncomfortable or your appetite may be poor right now, but it is so important to eat well! Experiment by avoiding certain foods and eating others, or by changing the time at which you eat or the amount you eat. It might help you feel a lot better.

If your HIV is causing serious health problems, you may need assistance in shopping, cooking or eating. Seek help from volunteers or friends, and keep in close contact with your doctor.

What About Junk Food?

First of all, some things that people call junk food are really good for you. Pizza, hamburgers, tacos, sandwiches, and ice cream are all nutritious. If you think about it, they are made from cheese, meat, milk and bread. You can feel good about eating them.

Not so with some other foods. Candy, chips and soft drinks are mostly made from fat and sugar. They have very little protein, vitamins and minerals. If you eat too much of this junk, you may find you are not hungry for foods in the basic food groups which give you what your body needs.

On the other hand, junk foods usually have a lot of calories. People with HIV can lose weight rapidly, and junk foods may help with weight gain. But don't forget to enjoy the junk foods along with healthy foods for extra calories and good nutrition, too!

Food Safety

NOTE: This advice about food and cookware is meant to protect you from the

germs they can carry. HIV cannot be spread by food or water. Feel free to have friends in your kitchen and to cook and share meals with them.

You have to be especially careful with food when you are infected with HIV. There are dangerous germs on all the food we bring home. You need to handle it right, cook it right and store it right to keep those germs from getting to you.

*Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly. Use a vegetable brush designed for this purpose.

*Throw away any fruit or vegetable which has a rotten or moldy spot on it.

*Do not eat raw meats or fish, even in small amounts. No sushi or rare steak-ever!

*Thaw frozen meats and other frozen foods in the refrigerator or in a microwave oven set to defrost. Never thaw foods at room temperature. Germs that grow at room temperature can make you very sick.

*Don't eat raw eggs. Inspect for cracks in the shells while your buying them.

*Use separate cutting boards for raw foods and cooked foods.

*Throw away moldy cheese. It's not good enough to just cut off the moldy part.

*Don't let hot foods cool down at room temperature. Put them in the refrigerator right away. If it is a large amount of food, put it in two or three containers so the refrigerator can cool it all quickly.

*Keep your refrigerator cold. You might wish to get a refrigerator thermometer. Keep it set no higher than 40 degrees. Your freezer should be at 0 degrees.

*Use hot, sudsy water to wash your dishes. Let it out of the sink when it gets dirty and replace it with fresh. Any food germs left on your plate can make you sick the next time you eat from it.

*Keep everything clean. Clean your counters often and clean them well. Wash your hands with soap and water a lot during cooking.

*Don't taste anything that you think might be spoiled. If in doubt, throw it out!

*Use pasteurized milk only. This means it has been treated with heat to destroy harmful germs. Look for the word "pasteurized" on the label. NEVER DRINK MILK FRESH FROM THE COW.

*If you have old dishes, cups or plastic containers with a lot of scratches in them, throw them out. Germs love to hide in scratches and they are very difficult to clean out of there.

If you would like more information from the book. Request for copies can be sent to: Jesus Gonzalez

STD/AIDS Program
4210 E. 11th Ave.
Denver, Co. 80220.

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DAVID "G." ASST. MANAGER

BOBBY H., ASSOC. & JEFF L., ASSOC.



A New Word in AIDS Prevention Relapse Safer Sex

Recent evidence shows gay men may be slipping in adherence to consistent safer practices. educators pinpoint lack of social support for safer sex as a key factor.

By Michael De Mayo
(Gay Community News)

We've heard it all before. "on me, not in, except with a condom," "Men: Use Condoms or Beat!," "Safer Sex: Do It!," "Hot, Horny, and Healthy," "Love Me, Love My Condom." These are just some of the slogans that have appeared on buttons, T-shirts, and posters over the past few years to promote safer sex. For many of us, like it or not, safer sex is now an integral part of our

lives. For gay men whose sexual expression and freedom is such a large part of our identity, redefining and restructuring sexual activities has been, and continues to be, a courageous and passionate act made all the more difficult by an unsupportive society ruled by homophobia, fear, and ignorance. But whether HIV positive or negative, practicing safer sex has allowed us to retain that sexual freedom. In large part, we have met the challenge. And as a result, the gay community has affected a behavior change among its members unprecedented in the history of public health education. We've seen seroconversion rates among gay men as a group drop from a high of 25 percent to current rates of only one to two percent. (Note: while this low rate is a victory, it is important to note that it does not account for differences of race and class, and is probably most applicable to white, middle class gay men.) Sexually transmitted diseases, which plagued the gay community long before the onset of HIV infection, have decreased at a phenomenal rate. Yes folks, it's true: "A Rubber Is a Friend in Your Pocket."

But now, there is a new problem that threatens to override this achievement, and those of us who work in AIDS prevention are learning a new word: relapse. "Just this once. I want to feel your skin next to mine without anything between us. I promise I'll wear a condom next time." How can we refuse? "Well, I don't have condoms with me. Look, I've gone this long without getting it, one time isn't going to make a difference." Oh, really? "He was so hot! I just didn't care, I wanted all of him." Was it worth it? "We got so fucked up last night, I don't remember what we did." Just because we know we should practice safer sex doesn't mean we will. Do you think that everyone who reads the Surgeon General's warnings on cigarette packs stop smoking? It would be naive and dangerous to think so. We've educated many men about safer sex. But it's not enough. It may seem as though the safer sex message gets overplayed, stressed too much: it may have even become tired. Nonetheless, it has become evident that to abandon that message now would create complacency among people at risk for HIV infection. The end result would be a relaxation of life-saving techniques. We would be faced with a new generation of individual testing antibody positive.

Unlike primary risk reduction programs, for which considerable research on the behaviors of gay and bisexual men has been conducted, research on the behaviors of gay and bisexual men has been conducted, research on relapse issues in minimal at best, and has focused almost entirely on middle-class, white gay men. In fact, the only clear evidence we have comes from a report released in February of this year by Ron Stall and Maria Ekstrand of the support positive attitudes toward safer sex among gay men who are HIV antibody positive, or have ARC or AIDS. For people living with AIDS, safer sex is a way to hold onto an active and satisfying sex life. It is also a way to avoid exposure to infections that may have been easily fought off under other circumstances.

The challenge for AIDS educators in preventing relapse from occurring is understanding what motivates individuals to abandon low-risk behaviors even though they may be aware of the risks. Why do people relapse? Perhaps because of a resistance to condom use. ("They taste awful," "They take the spontaneity out of sex," "They always break," "I can't feel anything with them on," "Do they really work?") It could related to one's own perception of risk. "I don't see why getting fucked without a condom is so risky if he doesn't cum in your ass," "I tested negative and so did my boyfriend, we don't need to practice safer sex." Or simply lack of negotiating skills ("When do I bring it up?" "Why should I have to be the one to talk about it? If he wants to suck my dick without a condom, it's his problem," "Sex isn't something you talk about, it's something you just do.")

There are many answers to the question of relapse, none of which are easily identified or understood. We know that social and peer support, as well as community norms, play important roles in one's perception of the importance of safer sex and ultimately creates a healthy and smart choice. However, lack of reinforcement for safer sex poses numerous consequences, only one of which is relapse. We can see from anecdotal evidence that other consequences include the decision not to have sex any longer, a withdrawal from social situations in which the possibility of a sexual encounter is imminent, and a breakdown in communication between long term partners.

At Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York City, we are beginning to see

common themes emerging from evidence gathered at primary risk-reduction workshops, focus groups, and interviews with members of the gay community and professional AIDS prevention educators. Perhaps the most obvious of these themes concerns social support for safer sex, participates of a GMHC pilot workshop indicated that these barriers are largely related to the lack of a positive gay identity and an inability to break free of

negative social values about sex. At the National AIDS Network Skill Building Conference held in Washington, DC. last month, GMHC sponsored a brief discussion session with community-based organizations around the country to address the issue of relapse. At that session, the most common factor identified as contributing to relapse behavior was the lack of social support for both safer sex and gay lifestyles.

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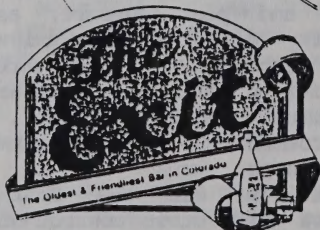
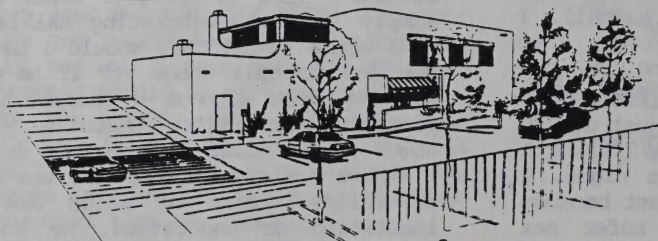
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